

192

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
CORPORATION of *Canterbury* C—y!
SHEWING THE
A B U S E
O F
CORPORATION GOVERNMENT.

K

By THO. ROCH, CABINET-MAKER,
CITIZEN of C—Y.

Printed for the AUTHOR,
And sold by R. STEVENS, Bookseller, in *Paternoster-*
Row, London. MDCC LX.
Price One Shilling.

125

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
CORPORATION OF
SHEWING THE

A B U S E

OF

CORPORATION GOVERNMENT.



By THO. ROOPE, CABINET-MAKER,
CITIZEN OF C—

Printed for the Author,
And sold by R. Stevens, Bookseller, in Pall-mall.
Rox, London. MDCCLX.
Price One Shilling.

T O T H E

R E C O R D E R.

S I R,

ON *Friday* the 22d of *August* 1760, I had the favour of a visit from my friend Mr. Alderman *Hayward*, and Mr. *Reynolds*; the Alderman informed me that he came at your request, to warn me against publishing any thing concerning the Corporation; and added, that you said, "though I published nothing but the TRUTH, yet I might be liable to punishment; and that I might find more difficulty in extricating myself from the Crown Office, than I had done from the Builders Company."

iv DEDICATION.

Consider, Sir, that you formerly persuaded the same gentleman to advise me to submit to the Corporation; which, if I had done, the impositions that have been practised on my Fellow-Citizens and me might still have continued.

I am surprized, Sir, as neither you nor the Corporation knew one article (till now it appears) that you should be apprehensive there needed such a threatening precaution.

If I have inserted any thing that is false or unjust, the credit of their station and yours, and the manner (as it may be supposed) in which you are capable of writing, will vindicate their character and yours against any thing that can be set forth by a man in a common station.

But 'till the publick are convinced in that point, I beg, dear Sir, ~~that~~ that you will forbear threatening; for as I have heard you say, "that the law has Iron claws," and having
received

DEDICATION. v

received such severe gripes from the Corporation (under your conduct) I now dread it more than ever; especially, when a gentleman of your judgment in it informs me, that it has a power to punish TRUTH.

Good Sir, have some regard to the credit of the City; for it will certainly give birth to a *Canterbury Tale*, that may be handed down for ages, if the Magistrates and Recorder should combine together to punish and make an example of plain, simple, honest, naked TRUTH, by putting it into the Crown-Office, which you represent as a place of terrible punishment, nay, even worse than a Corporation prosecution.

As most Dedicators have expectations from their Patrons, I shall beg of you, Sir, to make inquiry, and you will find that a great number of Fellow-Subjects and Fellow-Citizens have within these three years been relieved from the fines and imposi-
tions

vi DEDICATION.

tions which were formerly practised by the Corporation, and now, un-
awed by the Magistrates, enjoy their
right of Freedom, and pursue such
measures for an honest livelihood as
the law intitles them to; and when
you are satisfied in this point, as you
are Recorder of the City, and ought
by your station to encourage every
thing that tends to the good rule and
government of it, I hope you will
persuade the Magistrates and join with
them in thanking, protecting and re-
warding the man who has been the
author of it.

I am sure, Sir, such examples have
frequently been shewn by a much
higher Court, for publick services that
have not been attended with so much
labour and expence.

But if this, Sir, will be too great
an invasion on CUSTOM (which you
have made a steady CORPORATION
RULE) I shall beg of you to per-
suade them to return me the four
pounds

DEDICATION. vii

pounds they ordered me to pay in the Court-Hall for toleration to follow my trade, after I had purchased my Freedom ; and to reimburse me the expence they put me to in defending my right : then, Sir, as I have always been your friend and wellwisher, I may perhaps subscribe myself

Your humble Servant,

THOMAS ROCH.

DEDICATION.

vii
 bounds they ordered me to pay in the
 Court-Hall for toleration to follow
 my trade, after I had purchased my
 Freedom; and to reimburse me the
 expence they put me to in defending
 my right: then, Sir, as I have always
 been your friend well-wisher, I
 may perhaps subscribe myself



Your humble Servant

THOMAS ROCH.

T H E
P R O C E E D I N G S
O F T H E
C O R P O R A T I O N , &c.

WHEN this Corporation was first instituted and the Magistrates invested with so great a power, it may be supposed that men of the most eminent virtues and fortunes were appointed to maintain the property of the Citizens, and dispense Justice according to law and their Charter; and whilst that power was managed to the general good and advantage of those it was designed for, no doubt men of sense and probity were fond of having a share in the Government; but when a gradual succession admitted a superior number of a different sort sufficient to gain a majority on every *little* occasion; such men as before were fond of the office became ashamed of being ranked in the number. This I apprehend to be the present case, by the great number of capable men who
A have

have refused to appear in our Corporation; and so great has been their dislike, that near the number of forty within a few years have paid their fines to avoid the name of ALDERMAN or COMMONER. By this means the government and treasure of the City may fall into the hands of such men as may be incapable of paying the fines; the consequence of which may be, a conversion both of power and money, more to their own private advantage than the general good for which they were designed.

It has generally been thought a prudent policy in Government to appoint the most wealthy (if otherwise qualified) to the principal offices in publick affairs, as their fortunes set them above the temptations that indigent men frequently submit to, and their own properties deter them from proposing any laws that may prove prejudicial or a burden to them and their posterity; and since such men have been driven from our Corporation, it is the duty of every Citizen who has been injured by it to expose the practices which have chiefly been the cause, and endeavour to rouse an emulation in his Fellow-Citizens to withstand every Imposition; this perhaps for the future such attempts may prevent, and be a means of restoring the credit of our Corporation.

I SHALL

I SHALL therefore lay down the proceedings against me in so just a manner, that I am confident no attempt will be made to contradict any material part of what I assert; nor can it be imagined that I should presume to do otherwise, being an inhabitant among the people whose credit it concerns, and while so many are living witnesses of every transaction: and as the sequel will shew the success of their proceedings, I shall lay down the plan on which they were founded.

THE Magistrates have made it a custom here, to oblige a Citizen, after he has purchased his Freedom, to pay four pounds to the dealers in the same wares for toleration to follow his business; and if the purchaser does not meet with success in his trade and tries at any thing else, he must pay four pounds more: for instance, if a Carpenter, who has paid to that Company, puts his wife in a little way of dealing in chandlery ware, with the addition of thread, tape, buckles, buttons, and such articles as are customary in many small shops, he must pay four pounds to the Grocers, four pounds to the Haberdashers, and four pounds to the Smiths, besides quarterly payments to each of the fraternities: thus every motion a man makes for a livelihood, he must meet with a thorn of this kind; and so

strenuous are the Magistrates in support of this custom, that a Freeman's poor widow dare not expose the least trifle to sale without paying tribute, or must live in fear of having her goods taken out of her shop: even a man who by birth or service is intitled to his freedom and being indigent is obliged to wait till the approach of an election for Members of Parliament furnishes him with a Guinea to take out his copy, is then debarr'd from following his trade 'till he has paid Toleration-Money, and must perhaps continue all his life in a state of journey-work. An industrious man who may never have it in his power to lay down a sum of money, may have credit for materials, and from such beginnings many have made a reputable figure in trade; but by this cruel practice they are debarred from every advantage of that kind, and the very name of freedom destroyed by those men who are sworn to support it; the wise planners and supporters of these schemes have no doubt found their own account in it, for by cutting off those small branches of trade, they have chiefly monopolized it to themselves, without any regard to the right of Freedom or the injury they have done the City in general; for as the purchase of the Freedom is twenty pounds and attended with so many other expences; people of small fortunes

fortunes who choose to deal in several articles, have settled themselves without the city gates ; and *C—b—y* which was formerly so great a mart, has now considerably lost its trade, and the money which used to center here, is now divided in the several villages round it. Indeed our numerous decayed buildings are sufficient evidences of the decay of our trade ; for Cities like Kingdoms must rise or fall in proportion as they are well or ill governed.

CORPORATION frauds are generally extorted under the pretended sanction of Charter or antient Custom. It is most certain that Charters were designed to grant peculiar privileges to the Citizens, not for Magistrates who are appointed the guardians of the people, to keep us in a state of slavery till we pay for redemption, and presume a power of levying taxes on his Majesty's subjects independent of King and Parliament, having neither Charter nor Law to support their demand : and as to Custom, it is easy for men in authority to propagate bad ones ; for by falling separately on each purchaser, with threats of expensive suits and prosecutions, and doing them the utmost injury in trade, it is no wonder they have graced their annals with such a Custom. Though every man who has paid these Toleration-Fines has paid the money with as much reluctance

tance as an honest debtor enters a prison; yet when they have paid their garnish they cry out for Custom, and stand ready to strip the next that enters; and if any person refuses to pay, the whole fraternity are up in arms, and march in a body to demand assistance of their allies the Mayor and Aldermen. These are powerful forces for a single man to contend with. On my giving defiance to this antient Custom, the whole army was drawn up against me, the united forces of the Mayor, Aldermen and Commoners, and the antient and honourable company of *Builders*; the right wing commanded by Antient Charter and the left by General Custom; but on reconnoitring the enemy, I found them very badly disposed, and unsustained by law or justice; which gave me such a powerful ascendant over them, that I maintained the war several years; and without the assistance of subsidies, auxiliaries, reinforcement, desertion from the enemy, or any kind of assistance, I gained every battle, and fairly beat the enemy out of the field; and as his *Prussian* Majesty cannot as yet boast of such unparalleled conquests, I hope all neighbouring Princes will pay due honour, and deem me the greater Hero of the two. I must confess I received wounds and bruises in every battle, but having had a respite of near three years, and being naturally of a
good

good constitution, I am now as sound as a Roach, and ready for the field again; and being confident that the enemy are again assembling their forces, I am determined to follow the example of some great Princes, and fall upon them before they are fully prepared: and as it is customary for both parties to persuade the world of the justice of their proceedings, before I publish my Manifesto I shall give a narration of the last war.

In the year 1745, I purchased my Freedom of this City, and received a certificate from the Chamberlain, which specified the full franchises and liberties thereof: a few weeks after the Chamberlain sent for and acquainted me that he was master of the Builders Company, and I must pay to him four pounds for their use. I answered, that being a Cabinet-maker I had no connexion with the *Builders* Company, being only a *Furnisher* of houses; that Upholsterers, who were likewise *Furnishers*, were exempt from any other expence than the City Purchase; and hoped that I might enjoy my Freedom on the same terms that they and some other trades did; nor could there be a precedent for it, I being the first that took up a certificate in this City in the stile of Cabinet-maker; but he insisted there was a strong Charter which gave a power to seize my goods, which would be

done if I disputed. I told him I thought it a little severe he did not acquaint me with this additional expence beforehand, and requested to see the charter which gave him a power to make such an extraordinary demand after I had paid for my Freedom; but that he said he never did, nor would he break Custom; and desired me to consider the consequence of standing in contempt of the Corporation. From this time for several weeks after, I was frequently insulted by the officers of the Company, who in the rudest manner threatened to seize my goods, declaring every time they came, that it was the last indulgence they would grant. After bearing this treatment till my patience was tired, and fearing that my neighbours might imagine it was a demand of a different kind, for which I was thus insulted, I waited on the Chamberlain and told him, if he would shew the power that authorized his demand, or make me acquainted with any sort of advantage I might receive adequate to the money, I was willing to pay; but No; sue or distrain was the word. I then determined to rely on the Mayor, Aldermen and Commoners, and drew up a petition in that humble respectful manner which worthy good Magistrates ought to be addressed in, (for such I then thought they were) setting forth the reasons from which I surmised the demand
illegal;

illegal, and praying them, as I was under their protection, to screen me from every imposition. Whether they made any inquiry about the legality of the demand may be questioned; but this is certain that they ordered me to pay four pounds, which was paid before the Mayor and Aldermen in the Court-Hall, with this aggravation, that being an *Irishman* I was charged fifty shillings more than an *Englishman*, being deemed a Foreigner though then a Freeman of the City.

Next quarterly meeting I appeared among my brother *Builders*, shook hands all round, and very glad were they to see such a worthy member: they then shewed me a book with a list of the members names, and acquainted me that it was customary for every Member to write his name there. To this I complied, without the least suspicion; nor did they, I most solemnly declare, acquaint me that there was any instrument annexed to it, by which I bound myself to be obedient to their rules and laws; and this was the method they took to trepan each Member for fear of desertion, and to this deception the * Chamberlain being master was a witness. Signing my name was the foundation of the law suit, against which I give my Fellow-Citizens fair caution for the future. Next

B

they

* Alderman J—b was then Chamberlain.

they acquainted me that I must attend quarterly and pay so much, or on neglect must pay double; that I must pay so much *per* quarter for each journeyman I employed, and very reasonable said they, for the more business a man has, the better he is able to support the Company. To all this (knowing them to be a set of very honest fellows) I comply'd; and so we went on very lovingly for four or five years, in which time I discovered the *use* of the Company, and the *use* they made of the money; the order and manner of which I shall fairly relate, allowing a little levity in the description, being a subject which cannot be treated seriously by any who has been a witness to it.

There was a Master, two Wardens, and ten wise, orderly, sober, discreet Members, which are called the Counsel of the House, and such fine, orderly, discreet men were they, that though the Company did not consist of above seventy to chuse them from, 'tis a query whether such another draft could be made from seventy thousand; and as weighty affairs frequently obliged the Master and his Counsellors to meet at the tavern, to consult the general good of the Company, it was reasonable the reckoning should come from the publick stock. A few days before the grand annual feast, it was incumbent on these gentlemen to meet

at the tavern to give orders for the dinner, and there have a decent supper for themselves; and as they are very nice in their management, it frequently kept them up till four or five in the morning before they could settle the entertainment. On the feast day they met at the Master's house, where they were entertained with bread and cheese and strong beer, which frequently had such an effect on their limbs, as interfered with that nice order, which should have been observed in ranks, when the Grand Master marched them to hear a sermon on that solemn occasion: after sermon to the tavern for a whet, to keep their spirits up till dinner; and indeed to do them justice, there was wine in plenty, for being men very nice in party affairs, they annually begg'd two or three dozen of wine of the Members of Parliament to keep themselves free from bribery and corruption: but when the tables were spread and all the Company seated; such a sight! — There was the right worshipful the Mayor, his worship the Chamberlain, his worship the Recorder, the Town Serjeants waiting; and to see such decency and moderation through the whole Company would have charm'd one. There was not a man behaved as *Jack Hide* did among the Leather-sellers, with two or three plates full of victuals before him, for fear what he liked

should be devoured, with a great tumbler of punch to wash down every third mouthful, darting his fork into every fowl or joint within reach, that made it dangerous to sit within four human breadths of him. No such doings here, I assure you; here was the highest order, complaisance and good manners that could be observed on so publick an occasion: Good Mr. Mayor, shall I help your worship to this wing? yourself, good Mr. Recorder; and so it went on through both courses. After dinner his Majesty's health with a loud huzza; and indeed our Corporation are so very loyal at publick feasts, that they would have every branch of the Royal Family, man, woman and child, toasted in full bumpers: but that was never done save once, because huzzaing so much after every bumper made their heads ake. Then we had the Knights of the Shire, our Representatives in Parliament in their own wine: then, Mr. Mayor, your worship's health, Mr. Recorder, yours; and so full were all the Company of good wishes to each other, that nothing but your health and your health went round for three or four hours. While the Company was at dinner, the Officers were, as good men ought, taking care of their families, sending home pig, fowl, wine, and such things as, if laid on, might have disconcerted the order

order of the table *. Towards evening, when they were all *properly prepared* for business, the Master, Wardens and Counsellors withdrew into a grand apartment in the tavern provided for that purpose: there were they all seated in regular order according to their offices and seniority, and being grand festival and all robed in their best, they made a most splendid appearance: for my part I never approached them without feeling that tremor which is natural to every modest man that stands in presence of such an awful assembly. To this grand tribunal all offending mortal members of the Company were summoned, to answer for high crimes and misdemeanors; such delinquents as had neglected to pay their quarterages, and such as had given in a false list of their journeymen with an intent to defraud the publick, had such pathetick orations made them, as moved many a shilling out of their pockets. There were they obliged to stand and hear the Master and his Counsellors descant on the utility of laws: “ if there
 “ was no law there would be no living: if
 “ the statute laws which were made for the
 “ general good of the nation must be obeyed,
 “ so must likewise all by-laws which are
 “ made by the Master and his Counsellors
 “ for the good of this our Body Politick;”
 and as their laws were gentle, just, and
 merciful

* Custom for the Officers to send home wine and victuals.

merciful it was absolutely necessary to put them in execution; and in delivering their sentiments they used such easy language, that the point was always gained by mere dint of eloquence. The next thing was to make strict search after such wretches as could find time to attend dinner and not appear at church to hear a good sermon; this was deemed the highest crime a subject could be guilty of, and as some good men have most religion when they have most wine, these devout men were so inflamed against the offender that they would all rise up together and deliver their sentiments in such an elevated stile as stunned, confounded, and brought the sinner to repentance; but as their power in this case is equal to the Pope's, they always gave absolution for a Shilling &c. After going through this business, they again joined company for some hours to refresh themselves, and then attended the new chosen officer home, where, after drinking a bumper or two of Brandy or Rum, if no ale-house was up to interrupt them, if able to walk, they got home in the best manner they could. Being a witness of several of these scenes, it increased my astonishment that the Magistrates should so strenuously support such a useless and prejudicial set of people in thus squeezing out the vitals of every

§ Customary always to pay a shilling for not going.

every young citizen; and could discover no other motive than the share they had in the entertainment; and as I never saw any kind of business done but receiving and spending of money, I resolved if possible to break up the gang.

Next meeting, I acquainted the Master that I was determined no longer to pay an implicit obedience to him and his Counsellors; and requested that the laws of the Company might be read, and the account passed in publick, that I might know what money was received and how expended, and what right they had to demand of me so much more than many others paid; which if not complied with, I would withdraw from the Company. No, said he, the laws and the disposal of the money are intrusted in the hands of Me and my Counsellors, we never shew them to any common members; but if you behave as a good member ought, you may soon be a beadle, and gradually ascend to be one of the Council. This to be sure was a great temptation, but my resolution got the better of my ambition, so we parted for four or five years; during which time I had many threats from the Chamberlain of seizing my goods, or entering an expensive prosecution against me; which he never attempted, well knowing the strength of his cause, and having a little before that involved the city in an expensive

expensive and unsuccessful law-suit, which run them in debt and abridged them of many a comfortable evening. My example was followed by many other Members, and the Chamberlain resigning his command in the Company, was succeeded by another Alderman.

This gentleman on his accession found that by the desertion of so many Members the finances ran so low, that they were obliged at their meetings in Council to spend their own money; and as this threatened destruction to the Company, it was requisite to strike a vigorous blow, and as ROCH was the first aggressor he should be made the first example. Accordingly I was summoned by the new Master to answer neglect of duty, and pay arrears. I appeared, and urged my former demand in seeing what they called their Charter; that when satisfied it had a lawful sanction I would pay every thing it authorized them to receive. He answered as the former Master did, that the Charter was intrusted to Him and his Counsellors, and as they never had shewn them to any common Member, they never would; that they had a power to levy fines, and could prove Custom for it; that I had signed my name to be obedient to their Laws, and obedient to them I should be if I continued in the City. I could not help expressing my resentment
at

at a repetition of the abuse formerly practised on me; I told him, he knew I never heard the laws read, nor did I know I had signed to any, nor could I at that time suspect a Magistrate would take so base a method to trepan a Citizen into an obligation; and as to Custom, a highwayman, from a series of success, might as justly plead a *modus*; and requested to be satisfied in seeing to what I had signed. I might be satisfied in that point, he said, if my curiosity led me so far; but it should cost me a hundred pounds to see it before a Judge. Even at that expence, said I, I will see it, before I pay a shilling; and so we parted.

THE Master and his Council had many debates which way they should make a thorough example of me: some were for seizing my goods, being confident the Corporation would stand by them; but on a mature deliberation they wisely considered, "that in a number of Counsellors there is "safety;" and added one to their number by going to Mr. K—— the Recorder; who would not advise seizing my goods, but the law, he said, was open; which was well judged of him. They soon after waited on the Corporation in Council assembled, and the Master, being an Alderman, acquainted his brethren, that he had been with the Recorder, and shewed him their Charter, their By-Laws, and all their Powers; and

that He said they were as good and as strong, and as strong and as good as — I don't remember the simile, but to be sure it was something very good and very strong; and sued I must be in the name of the Corporation. To this the Corporation immediately consented, without sending for me, or inquiring whether I had any reasonable objections; and an order for immediate prosecution was entered in the City Book.

I am now opening a scene which was acted by the Mayor, Aldermen and Commoners, and the other Gentleman whose judgment they so much rely on; and though these gentlemen have pursued me for such a debt, I can, with confidence, say, that I never had a just demand made on me, but what I have answered with as much honour, as any Worship in this City; and during a residence of many years here, have lived as free from all kind of contention as most men, except what has regarded this Corporation and Company, and the national reflections that have attended it. As this can be no additional honour to me where I am known, nor advantage where I am not, I mention it only to shew the dangerous consequences of Corporation Government, when it falls into the hands of weak or wicked men; for these Gentlemen immediately on the application, (as I before observed) without sending for me or enquiring whether I had any reasonable objections to payment,

payment, entered an order in the City Book for immediate prosecution.

THUS was I delivered up into the most merciful hands of the *Builders*; but then they seemed a little perplexed, and knew not which way to proceed; for Mr. *Jekin* the Town-Clerk, being Clerk to the Company, could not be prevailed on to find out a By-Law amongst all their Laws, to bring the debt to forty shillings; and the act for the Court of Requests in this City prevented their commencing a prosecution in any other Court for a less sum. This caused several meetings, and as Mr. *Jekin* was an Attorney, he was deem'd a d—d queer fellow to stand shilly shally and not undertake a law-suit: d—n it, said they, we may as well take the action out for five pounds as for five shillings, we have got the Mayor and Corporation to stand by us, and there are seventy of us; we can raise four or five Guineas apiece; what man can stand against us! But these arguments were not sufficient for Mr. *Jekin*; as he knew they had no lawful claim, he would not undertake the cause: and happy it would have been for me, if every Lawyer in and about the City had been possessed of the same knowledge and principles.

In the mean time I sent a petition to the corporation, complaining of their severity in granting an order for prosecution

without knowing my objections to payment; setting forth the hardships a single man lay under in defending his property against a multitude; and that as they had a power to grant such an order, they had a power to inquire into the legality of the demand; and requested that they would order the Laws and Books of the Company before them, and give me a fair hearing, or revoke the order. This request could by no means be complied with, for as there were several Masters and Counsellors in the Corporation, an examination of this kind might make a grand discovery, and prove a destructive precedent to all Companies; so they seemed offended at being instructed (as they called it) in their duty, and disregarded the petition.

THE twenty-second day of *February* 1753, I had a Summons left at my house at eight o'clock in the evening, to attend the Court of Requests next morning; there the Mayor, Alderman *Watts*, and several of the Corporation, appeared to give judgment in their own cause; and, to mend the matter, the Master of the Company, being an Alderman, took out the action in his own name instead of the Corporation's. These blunders they were entirely ignorant of: but as I did not appear, and on inquiry finding the summons was not delivered to me, but left so late the evening before at my house, they

they did not think proper to grant a distress on my goods, or to seize my person, so indulged me till the next Court-day; when on receiving a proper summons I appeared, and knowing they had a pernicious illegal instrument ready to produce, and judging they would do it, I was at the expence of a Guinea for the attendance of Counsellor *Mills* (who had seen it) to blow up their frauds in open Court; but, on his appearance, they moved the Court for a month's respite to be provided with counsel; which was readily granted, and there it ended.

THEY now became the jest of the whole City, for bringing their action in this Court, where no Citizen could sit as a Commissioner, being a Corporation action.

THE Members now began to fall off from the Company very fast, and the Master and his Counsellors laid the fault intirely on Mr. *Jekin*; for had he been a man of spirit they would have gone another way to work; but he intirely washed his hands of them, and quitted the Clerkship of the Company. They then chose Mr. *Balder-son*, Attorney, for their Clerk, and things went on better to their liking; he by their direction (I suppose) drew up a bill by which I was made debtor to the Company 6 *l.* 15 *s.* 3 *d.* This bill was delivered by Mr. *John Jagger*, Plumber, then Warden, and Mr. *Balder-son* attended to see the money paid.

paid. On reading the bill I acquainted the gentlemen with my surprize at seeing the debt increase so fast, as but a few weeks since they allowed it under forty shillings by bringing it to the Court of Requests. He answered me, that the Company did not then know how great their power was ; that on searching their Records since, they found a By-Law which gave them a power for the demand in the bill ; with which if I did not comply, he must obey orders and enter an action for it. I begged a few days to consider of it, which were granted. This bill I sent the next Court-day in a petition to the Corporation, shewing the bad consequence of lending their authority to a set of men who assumed a power beyond regal, in presuming to levy such fines on his Majesty's subjects, and in refusing to shew the Law or Power that authorized their demand ; and I requested once more, as they would not suffer me to see the Laws, that they would make an examination into the legality of this last demand, or revoke the Order. Alderman *Hayward* (then Mayor) a man of good sense, who speaks well on most occasions, urged every reason that was requisite in regard both to the honour of the Corporation and the interest of the Citizens, to make a thorough examination ; and was well seconded by Mr. *Reynolds*, then Sheriff, a very capable man ; but what they
said

said was little regarded, for the general cry was, " what have we to do with him and " the Company ? the law is open, let him " comply with Custom, or fight it out." Finding no redress, I remained determined to stand the issue. Mr. *Balderson* came to me again to demand payment ; on which I acquainted him with my resolution of defending the action ; but heard no more from him, for he soon after quitted his Clerkship ; nor did I hear any more of them for near a year ; at which time Mr. *Greenland*, Attorney was their Clerk, and he in looking over their Laws, Records, &c. found there was a mistake in their former bill, and delivered me a new one amounting to 2 *l.* 1 *s.* 4 *d.* this was an extraordinary abatement of the former ; but I told him I should consider of it before I paid it.

HAVING had such bad success with petitions, I went to the Hall next Court-day, and begged admittance ; which being granted, I entered, and saw them seated in a formal manner, with the Sword of Justice before them. On recollecting the abuse I had received, I declare I trembled for fear I should be provoked to say any thing that might put me in the power of such a set of Magistrates. I began my application by acquainting the Court that they knew the first demand the Company made on me was under forty shillings by
their

their bringing it into the Court of Requests; I shewed the bill sent me immediately after of 6*l.* 15*s.* 3*d.* reminding them of my sending that bill with a petition; and of the requests I made concerning an examination. I then produced the last bill of 2*l.* 1*s.* 4*d.* which proved, if I had complied with the former, that I should have paid near five pounds in my wrong. I then complained of their severity in leaving me thus exposed to a set of men who did not make it a rule to demand only what they had a right to, but what they could get by demanding, under their protection; and required once more that they would order them to produce their Laws and Books, and make an examination, or erase the order. One said it was a strange thing a man should dispute about such a trifle; another said every man should comply with Custom, what have we to do with it? Esq; *Talput*, Mayor and Baker, was so insensible of the matter before him, that he said it was strange a man should make such a noise about six pence a quarter. Alderman *Hayward* asked the Alderman that was Master, whether he could not trump up By-Laws to answer all his different bills? and as Mr. *Roch* had so many different demands made on him, what reasonable objection he could make to shewing the By-laws under which he made the present demand?

mand? and desired to know in what manner he had satisfied himself that their demand was just. Alderman, said he, the Charter is in *Latin*, which I do not understand; but Mr. *Greenland* our Clerk, who understands *Latin*, says it is exact to a farthing; and as the Charters are delivered into my hands, none shall see them but whom I please. At last it was agreed that I might see the Charter, before the Recorder himself and his Clerk, and have the Recorder's opinion on it. It may be judged what an indulgence this was! as the Recorder was Counsel to the Company, they having been many times with him on the occasion; but having no other opportunity to see it, I consented. We met at the Recorder's house, who received us with his usual politeness, and after being satisfied that it was by consent of the Corporation, the Charter was spread on the table. I began to look for the Royal Name and Seal that authorized it, but could discover neither, and this *Latin* Charter was in plain *English*; but as it was wrote in an antique Court-hand, there may be some allowance for such a mistake in an Alderman. The Recorder did not offer to read it himself, nor order his Clerk to read it, but left that office to Mr. *Greenland*, who had not proceeded far before I suspected by his connections that some things were omitted, and then I scrutinized what

he had read; and found just reason for my not being satisfied with his proceedings. After this we went through the whole, and as this was the instrument on which they founded their *right*, I was fully convinced of the *wrongs* they had done: it was only a simple agreement drawn up by the several artificers in the Building Trade in the reign of King *James the First*, to meet and settle matters agreeable to themselves; and their articles were signed by the Mayor and Aldermen, who were to use their authority in obliging each particular branch to keep within bounds, and neither to work nor undertake any thing but in the branch they were bred to; and though both the Corporation and Company denied me a sight of this By-Law; I discovered these articles, "That
 " the Master, Wardens, &c. shall four
 " times in the year (at least) and oftner,
 " if need be, summon and warn a publick
 " meeting for a due examination of the
 " execution of those orders; and the May-
 " or and Aldermen were annually to inspect
 " into the proceedings of the Company,
 " to hear and determine all disputes that
 " might arise among the Members, and
 " receive half the fines they collected for the
 " general use of the City. No obligation
 " on any man to enter, nor none on them
 " to admit, but whom they pleased. No
 " quarterly

“ quarterly payments for any Member that
 “ attended ; nor any expence for employ-
 “ ing Journeymen ; every man who was
 “ Free by birth or servitude was to be ad-
 “ mitted for half a crown ;” but these gen-
 tlemen latterly have extorted thirty shil-
 lings : they who purchased their Freedoms
 were to be admitted for thirty shillings,
 from such they have extorted four pounds,
 deeming them foreigners : and such abomina-
 ble impositions appeared through the whole,
 as might sufficiently plead an excuse for
 their concealing what they called their Char-
 ter. I compared the several articles with my
 bill, and mistakes were allowed. I then
 told the Recorder that I imagined on bal-
 lance the Company was indebted to me,
 by extorting the sum of four pounds, deem-
 ing me a Foreigner. I ask’d him whether
 the law deemed me such being a native of
Ireland, and at that time a Freeman of the
 City ? He made no answer, but rose up and
 brought a Law Book from which he read
 several Acts of Parliament (made if I re-
 member right, in the reign of *Henry VII.*)
 which Laws laid the natives of *Ireland* un-
 der such severe restrictions, that I imagined
 he meant to persuade me, that I was in-
 dulg’d in being permitted to continue in the
 City : I told him I did not inquire after
 obsolete laws, but wanted to know my pre-
 sent privileges. He gravely said (having a
D 2
good

good memory) “ you are no *Englishman*.”
 “ That, I said, I just now told you :” and this
 is all I could get from him ; but he indeed
 got half a Guinea of me, though it was
 by appointment of the Corporation that I
 attended him ; and he had received several
 fees of the Company on the same occasion.
 When we departed from the Recorder, the
 Master and Clerk made proposals of ac-
 commodation ; that they would be very
 easy with me and rectify all mistakes, but
 something I must comply with, or the Com-
 pany was intirely ruined : I told them, it was
 my intention if possible to put a stop to their
 unjustifiable proceedings ; that I would not
 run the hazard of my reputation by appear-
 ing any more among them, nor would I for
 any consideration that my friends in *Ireland*
 should know that I had ever associated with
 such a set of gentry. This speech being
 spread among my brother Builders so in-
 flamed them, that d——n their souls but
 they would spend the last shilling they had
 to drive me out of the City, and send me
 to my own country ; which to be sure was
 a most righteous resolution ! others more
 violent were for immediate satisfaction ; a
 Bricklayer swore d——n his blood as he
 knew the Corporation would stand by them,
 he would take me by the heels and ruff-
 cast the wall with my brains ; brains, d——n
 him, says an old Paviour, he has none, let
 me

me take him one knock with my rammer, and I'll mash him all to pieces; let me at him, says a Carpenter, I'll divide him so clean with one stroke of my ax, that there shan't be a stone difference in the sides: here the Grand Master interposed, and said they were all a pack of fools; that, said he, would be putting him out of his misery at once; let me manage him; there is a certain old friend of mine, a Lawyer, who I can see plain has as great an aversion to an *Irishman*, as a Jew has to a Christian; let me put him into his hands, there by G—d he will be plagued as much as if he was put into the *Spanish* inquisition: who this Lawyer was I could never learn; but the affair was settled, and law was to be the punishment: the Master said he would be 100 *l.* and so the subscription went on, every man subscribing in proportion to his malice. Their next care was to seek out for an honest Attorney, and fixed upon Mr. *Bambridge* of *London*. Process was served, and succeeded by a Declaration of *a hundred ninety-two sheets*; the demand for *twenty-four shillings*. This Declaration I hung up in my house for several months, that my Fellow Citizens might see what kind of Instrument the Fathers of the City provided wherewith to correct their disobedient children; but on reading it so frequently, and in such a number of sheets

sheets finding Mayor and Aldermen so often mentioned in every sheet, it so filled my head that I could not say five words together on any subject without putting in Mayor or Alderman; if I went into my yard to give orders for cutting up a log of wood, I would say to my foreman, here, *Newcomb*, see that this Alderman be cut into two inch plank; if I walked with a friend, and happened at a distance to see an old woman in a red gown, though there was no appearance of fur, I would say here comes Alderman *Davison*, or Alderman *Pembroke*, or Alderman *Watts*, or Alderman *Talput*, or Alderman *Thomas*, or Alderman *Knowler*, or Alderman *Lad*, or any of them that came in my head. A lady a very good customer of mine, talking to me one day on the advanced price of mahogany; Indeed Madam said I, good Aldermen were never so scarce as they are at present; and having a native propensity that way, I made so many blunders that at last I was obliged to lock up the Declaration; and from that day I have as much dreaded to open the drawer as some superstitious people dread to break up the ground where mortals have been buried who died of the plague.

This Declaration made a great noise in the City, it being the opinion of most people that they depended more upon the length

length than the justice of their cause; yet though most people condemned them, every body blamed me, as I had so small a matter to contend for at such a certain expence, and they had the City money to play with.

A particular friend of mine who had about that time quitted the Corporation, advised me in a very friendly manner to pay the present expence and proceed no farther; assuring me that they were determined to have as much law as could be purchased for money before they gave up the Custom of Companies; then laid before me the injury I was like to sustain in trade, for, says he, you know there are a number in the Corporation that are Masters, Wardens and Counsellors of Companies, and I know that there are a number of them that are so fond of eating and drinking at free cost, that they would rather send to *France* for a set of furniture than have any dealing with you, for attempting to break what they call so good a Custom. I requested my friend would let me know who those gentlemen were that were most sanguine in the affair, that I might take a private opportunity to expostulate with them: That said he I dare not, for we are all sworn to secrecy. Secrecy, Sir? Indeed we are, *Tam*, and in so strict a manner, that the most minute affair must not transpire from our Counsels, which has often made me bite my

my nails; for when some things have gained a majority, I have been ashamed to walk the streets for fear of being thought one of the number; nay I had the mortification to hear one man in publick (who I knew voted against you) condemn the proceedings, with an intent to throw the odium on others; and one man a Magistrate (you may guess who I mean) takes this opportunity of indulging himself in cursing and swearing, and will frequently say, d——n you there's none of you can inform against me without perjuring yourselves; and if we reprove him for it, to make us believe he is a man of worth, he'll cry z——ds a ten thousand pound man may do any thing. Well but, Sir, (said I) I suppose these gentlemen are sworn to justice as well as secrecy, and that none of them would sport so much with an oath as to give a vote without being provided with a reason for it; and if so, what occasion is there for concealing their names? Why they are sworn to justice, but I assure you [my friend has sometimes an odd way of expressing himself] that there are some among them that neither vote, eat, or drink any thing in a Corporation way that goes against their stomachs; and as you have a set of men to deal with, that will hear no kind of reason that stands in competition with eating and drinking

drinking at free cost, I earnestly beg as you have nothing but what you have earned, to drop this perplexing affair; for it would grieve me to see you fall a sacrifice to such a set of men.

My friend I knew meant me well; but as nothing can be more disagreeable than advice against a determined resolution, as I was mounted I was resolved to push on, though I knew I had a tiresome, long, dirty road to travel, not a soul in the City to bear me company, and must expect to be pelted with dirt from behind every hedge as I passed along. So on I went.

Mr. *William Chamberlain* of *Crane-Court, London*, was my Attorney, who gave me convincing proofs of his abilities, by having his opinion on every part of the proceedings confirmed by such Counsel as we applied to; by the right use he made of my adversaries blunders; by the endeavours he used to abridge instead of lengthening the proceedings: these with his general character fully convinced me that he was above the mean temptations of the law. The cause went on through the usual proceedings till *August 1756*, when the assizes were held at *Maidstone* in *Kent*; during which time I was often advised by my brother Builders to submit, they being well assured from the Recorder that I stood no manner of chance, and was only knock-

E ing

ing my head against a post; but as my impenetrable skull would not receive their counsel, they by advice of their lawyers countermanded tryal about nine days before the assizes, when it appeared to them (what we knew before) that there was a most violent blunder in the Declaration. This caused several debates, whether they should or should not begin again? but as all the City joined with me in the laugh against them, and the worshipful Companies began to fall off in esteem, d—n it, say they, we will have t'other touch at him.

Now we had a new worshipful Mayor, known by the name of *Jack L*—— the Leatherfeller, and it was requisite to have consent of the Mayor and Corporation to proceed again, which the Mayor, being a man of uncommon strict justice would by no means comply with, till they gave a 500*l.* bond to indemnify the Corporation; “On these terms, Gentlemen, you may have *Rock* delivered up to you again, but otherwise I do assure you, as I am Mayor of the City, my conscience will not permit me to see a Citizen thus abused.” This was a confounded stroke on my brother Builders, who had now fairly got their hands in the mortar; and caused many a consultation with the Masters and Counsellors how to get them clear: in the mean time as his present Worship talked much of justice before he was elected,

electd, the opportunity of having such an upright man at the head of affairs, prompted me to send another petition ; and as I knew they paid little regard to my former ones, I again set forth all my past grievances in the plainest manner I was capable of ; mentioning the many different demands they had made on me, and the several requests I had made to the house to inquire into the proceedings of the Company ; that I was unacquainted with the last demand of 24 shillings, till it appeared in the Declaration : I prayed them to shew my petition to the Recorder, though I had in my former interview shewed him the several bills, and was almost confident, as he was Counsel in the affair, that he knew all their proceedings ; yet on an application of this kind, I thought it impossible for the Recorder of the City any further to assist in carrying on an affair where the interest of a Citizen was so deeply concerned. I must here observe that I mentioned to the Corporation in my petition, that the Recorder took half a Guinea of me, which perhaps was not well judged in me.

My petition was read, and my request was complied with ; the Mayor, Alderman *Grey*, Alderman *Hayward* and the Town-Clerk went to the Recorder, where my petition was again read ; from thence Alderman *Grey* and Alderman *Hayward* came to my
E 2
house,

house, and informed me that the Recorder seemed much inflamed at my petition; that on his reading that part concerning the twenty-four shillings, he said I was a lying fellow, that himself had settled that sum due from me to the Company, and that I had consented to pay it, nor did he from that time expect to hear any more about it; and that he thought me a madman for attempting to oppose so just a demand; and said, it would be good nature in them to endeavour to make it up between the Company and me. There I grant he was right, in regard to his Clients, for a reconciliation must have been at my expence, and consequently have left them in possession of their former practices. As to his opinion concerning my understanding, we were upon very equal terms, for his maintaining so lame a cause; but his charging me with a falsehood before Alderman *Grey*, Alderman *Hayward* and the Town-Clerk, men whose opinion I had a great regard for, gave me more concern than all the abuse I had met with, as not at that time expecting the opportunity which afterwards offered to hear him deny it before the same Gentlemen: he was well pleased when he received my half Guinea, but much provoked to find the shadow of it in my petition.

THE

THE report of the Recorder's opinion made a great change in affairs; the Builders, who before seemed sick of the affair, began to revive, and *Jack L—* (whose very soul depends on the hopes of eating that attend his offices) being Master of two Companies, ran all over the town, and made it appear plain that I was mad; "for, says he, the Recorder says so, and d—n me if I did not think so myself, but loth to mention it till I had Counsel's opinion: nay the case is plain, Gentlemen, for who but a madman would dispute the justice of our Corporation:" Then his Worship, who ought to have been the last man in the City on such an occasion, sent for the Master and Counsellors all round one by one, and persuaded them to sign to the 500 *l.* bond; but when they came to the stake they seemed devilish loth to be tied; yet he assuring them there was no kind of danger, and proving from the Recorder's opinion that I was mad; by first engaging a few that were most willing, a precedent drew in the rest, and they were all fairly bit: This entirely answered *Jack's* ends; some of his disobedient Members brought in their money for fear of a Declaration of 192, for d——n his soul if any man that refused should have a line less than *Rock* had. This bond being signed, a fresh order was granted for prosecution, and the whole

whole pack once more set in full cry after poor Puffs.

WHEN this order was entered, Mr. *Chamberlain* advised me to apply for a sight of the City Charters ; I made my application to *L—d* the Mayor, he sent for the Town-Clerk and consulted him on it ; Mr. *Jekin* said it was a reasonable request, and ought to be complied with, and *L—* promised I should see them, but afterwards denied them. On refusing, Mr. *Chamberlain* obtained a rule of Court, which obliged the Mayor, the Chamberlain, and him they call the Father of the City, to attend and shew me every thing in their possession, being my property as well as theirs. My Attorney waited on the Master of the Company, and by that authority demanded the Books and By-Laws of the Company ; Alderman *Davison* produced them, and said he was ready to deliver them up whenever they were called for ; the dates of them were taken and a time appointed. But when we met at the Court-Hall for a general inspection, he refused to produce them ; Alderman *Thomas* the Chamberlain, charged him on his peril to deliver them ; and told him the consequence of withholding them in defiance of an order from the King's-Bench. “ Sir, said the Alderman, as I am Master and act for the whole Company, I can do nothing in this affair against the opinion of the Coun-

Counsellor we have all agreed to rely on, and have been advised by him (since I consented) not to produce them." It is very strange that this Lawyer should so far engage himself in a Corporation cause, as to advise the Master of the Company to withhold the By-Laws (which belonged to the City) from an order of the King's-Bench and the command of the Chamberlain.

KING *James* the First, who granted our City a Charter, said, "the Recorder should be a discreet man, in the laws of *England* skilful;" he constituted the first himself and called him his "well beloved *John Boyce*, Knight, in the laws of *England* learned;" by which I imagine his Majesty had personal knowledge of him, or a recommendation that he was a wise and honest man, and such as would advise the Magistrates to act in every point to the honour and interest of his Majesty's subjects in this City. Methinks I would give a mahogany desk to know whether he would have undertaken such a law suit between the Magistrates and a Citizen and have acted throughout the whole in the same manner as

WHEN we searched the Records, we found that there had been formerly a Company of Coblers, another of Minstrels, and several others which do not exist, but found no Copy of any that are at present. It is
strange

strange that the Corporation should formerly suffer so many Companies to break up; nay even within these fifteen years, two, the Barbers and Vintners, and take such pains to oblige a single man to continue in one; but perhaps it was not customary then for Aldermen to be Masters, nor indeed could it be ever designed they should, they being appointed Judges of disputes between the Masters and Members in all the By-Laws, and consequently by no means proper for the office of Masters of Companies.

The next assizes being held at *Rochester*, both parties attended, and Briefs and Guineas were delivered to Counsel on each side: it gave me much pleasure to hear the Recorder had his five Guineas before the mistake was discovered; for a few hours before trial, Mr. *Greenland* their deputy Attorney came and acquainted me that they had withdrawn their Record: "How so, Mr. *Greenland*?" "Why another d——d blunder in the Declaration, and perhaps Attorneys may be blamed for other people's faults:" "Well, now I suppose you have done with this affair, Mr. *Greenland*?" "Done with it! No, no, don't mistake yourself, for our party are now more inflamed than ever, I perceive plain that the more they are bit, the more they'll bite; besides to drop it now would reflect

“ reflect on us Lawyers, and the world will
 “ imagine we have no just grounds to pro-
 “ ceed on: we must have your company to
 “ *Maidstone* next assizes, I assure you.”

THIS affair being over, we proceeded home very lovingly; but I could perceive some alteration in the state of their affairs, for Mr. *Potter*, one of the principal Builders, who went in a coach, came home *behind* one. When I approached *Canterbury*, and turning about, I perceived my dejected adversaries look just like the prisoners that were culled out from the vanquished to grace the ovations of the antient *Roman* Generals; and though I am of a nation intirely free from ambition, yet I could not help doing myself an honour that I was as justly intitled to as ever *Julius Cæsar* was; so I ordered my charioteer to drive on in slow and solemn pace, and entred the City in triumph before them. Their returning home without daring to bring on the tryal, caused some people to imagine that the Lawyers were on the same terms with the Builders that the Builders were with me. The Corporation inveighed most bitterly against the Lawyers, which in fact they had no right to do; for as the Lawyers are an antient fraternity, they have as great a right to keep up their By-Laws and Customs, as the Corporation and Builders Company. Their affairs now stood in a

worse state than ever; a general dislike prevailed against all Companies: people now said, *Rock* is certainly right; how damnably have we been cheated by these fellows! and several talked of suing the Masters for the money they had paid them: This caused a dismal consternation amongst them, for fear of being brought to a bad reckoning. Alderman *Davison*, who was Master of the Company, and who is since dead, had the general character of a good-natured honest man, nor have I ever heard that he did an ill office to mankind; and however sanguine he was at first on an imaginary right, he was certainly pushed on latterly by some designing Men in the Corporation; and being a man of fortune they wanted him to fight their battle, well knowing that if his Company drop'd, theirs must; and by many insinuations, that I would drop it if he persisted, they prevailed with him once more to carry on the cause.

NEXT assizes both parties appeared at *Maidstone*; Briefs and Guineas delivered as before; and having the appearance of a long cause, Lord *Mansfield* ordered the Counsel to attend at six in the morning, — *Hay*, Esq; opened the cause in a modest, sensible, genteel manner, but Mr. *K*— judging his natural manner more to the purpose, acquainted the Court, that the Defendant was a Stranger, from a distant land;

land ; and that the antient City of *Canterbury* had been honoured with many privileges from the wisest and best of Kings ; and these Kings knowing the merit, loyalty, worth, and honour, and so forth, of the inhabitants, had granted them many Charters ; one of which they were ready to produce, and could prove it to be very good and very strong ; and this Stranger the Defendant was refractory, and stood in defiance of the wholesome By-Laws that were made under the best of Charters by the best of Magistrates ; and their reason for carrying on such a trifling cause to such a length, was to punish and make an example of him : and so much did he hold me in contempt for not being his countryman, that I imagined he intended to persuade the Court that I was not intitled to common justice. I must confess I was pleased both with his looks and his language, as being confident they would rather influence than prejudice a Christian Court in my favour ; and on a survey all round I discovered but one man present that had the least semblance of a Jew. *Luke Robinson, Esq;* one of my Counsellors (who is a little arch in his way) knowing the man, and perceiving the prejudice he had against me on account of my country, imagined his pride would not suffer him to own me in publick Court for a Fellow-Citizen. “ Sir, said he, before you

proceed in charging the Defendant with your Corporation Debt, I insist on your proving him one of your Fellow-Citizens *. This question had the effect just as he imagined, for Mr. K——'s pride could not get the better of such a mean condescension; and whether he had any meaning I know not, but he stood gaping at the rest of the Citizens like a ——. There was a number of Citizens in Court, but as they make it a rule to imitate the Recorder as near as possible, they all stood gaping at him as he did at them; and not a soul of them would own me for a Fellow-Citizen; at last the Cryer of the Court, perceiving I suppose the stupidity that seized them, called out three several times to the Mayor and Aldermen to produce their evidence, or they would be nonsuited; after which we had free leave of the Court to depart home in a peaceable manner.

HERE the law-suit ended, which from beginning to ending proved a tolerable good jobb to Mr. K—; but as there was money got by it, most of the Citizens were pleased it fell into his hands, being sure of having a share of it amongst them, as he is So Great a promoter of our Trade, and a remarkable Encourager of Arts and Sciences, and being Recorder of the City, so good a pre-

* By neglect or design the City Book was not produced to prove me a Freeman.

precedent to the neighbouring gentlemen, that I could venture to say he never sent to *London* for a joint of meat, a loaf, or a pound of fresh butter !

BUT the poor Corporation and Company could not forbear railing against the Lawyers ; “ Our cause, said they, is as good a cause as ever appeared before a Judge. C—e them, they plague us more with their By-Laws and Customs than we can plague *Roch* with ours ; it is all owing to their d—n’d confounded blunders ; ” and indeed so many blunders were made, that I began to think it a little unnatural in me to contend so long with a set of worthies, who had given so many convincing proofs that they were my own dear countrymen.

Now all Companies seemed to be in a more deplorable state than ever ; and as there were no possible means to keep them up, but by knocking me down, the Corporation still kept clapping the Master on the back to die in his faith ; but as he had expended all the money, he called on his Counsellors to take up their bond, and likewise on those who had subscribed ; but the devil a farthing would any of them pay (nor were there any that did pay during his life.) There was now so strong an appearance of a law-suit among themselves that I seemed quite neglected. But two gentlemen, who were Masters of Companies, did
not

not care it should drop so ; they once more got hold of the Alderman ; “ D—n me, *Davison*, I thought you was a man of spirit ; to die thus in your work, when one more stroak will finish it ! I’ll tell you what we have been thinking of, you shall apply to the house for another order of prosecution, I’ll be d—n’d if they don’t grant it you ; I have secured the young ones that are lately entred ; and when he finds our pack continually supplied with fresh dogs, as he has had such a hard chase, if he does not lie down when we begin to open, I’ll give you leave to carry me to *Oaten-Hill* *.” This prevailed so far that fresh application was made, and I had notice from Alderman *Bing*, the Mayor, to attend the Court-Hall, where a fair hearing should be given to both parties before an order was granted. I attended, and was called into a back room where they were all locked up to prevent witnesses, which I think was a prudent precaution, and the Recorder was appointed to examine the affair. I was not in the least surprized at their partiality in appointing a person to examine both parties, who had been Counsel and so sanguine on their own side. He began in his natural manner, and asked me whether I would own myself a Member of the Company ? “ That, Sir, said I, is “ not a question for you to ask, nor will I “ answer

* A place of execution.

“ answer it.” On this occasion, I suppose he thought a speech requisite to convince me that it was my duty to answer such questions as he was pleased to ask in presence of the Mayor and Aldermen. Though he did formerly cast a few national reflections, which were a little stinging, yet I would not have it imagined that I meanly bear resentment, or conceal from the world the shining figure he made, and the noble language he made use of on this great occasion; nor will it be in the least surprizing to those who know his general manner, how far his generous, free and easy temper has rendred him the admiration of the publick, and how much that noble dignity he bears points him out for peculiar remark, even among the Mayor and Aldermen. He now seemed determined to exert his abilities to the utmost, and formed both his aspect and attitude in such a commanding manner as caused a profound silence; he then began his oration, and thus he said verbatim,

“ You are a faucy fellow.”

This elaborate speech I returned with spirit; but, as he had the advantage of education, I could not match him in elegance of stile. After a few compliments were over, he desired to hear what I had to say? I told him I came for that purpose, if he would restrain his surly temper. That intirely settled

tled him, and then we proceeded to business. I desired him to recollect the interview I had with him at his house, concerning the validity of the Builder's By-Law, and whether there was mention made at that time of any sum of money due from me to them? and whether I had promised payment? He answered, No, none that I know of. Alderman *Hayward*, who had heard him unjustly assert the contrary, said, "Sir, did not you settle the sum of twenty-four shillings due from Mr. *Roch* to the Company? No, said he, to be sure I did not; that I had no business with." That point being settled; to their great surprize, I drew from my pocket an exact copy of their By-Law, and shewed them that part, which obliged them annually to inspect into the proceedings of the Company, to hear and determine any disputes that might arise among the Members; which they had always refused to do, notwithstanding the many requests I had made them by petition for that purpose; by which neglect the company and I were involved in a lawsuit to the expence of several hundred pounds. I then pointed to them the several fines, shewing them that such Freemen as were to be admitted for half a crown, had been unjustly imposed on to the amount of thirty shillings; by which imposition many Freemen were deprived of the just privi-

privilege of exercising their trades in such small matters as their circumstances would permit. I then told them of Mr. *Harrison* the Carpenter, a purchaser, who on hearing that they again intended to prosecute me, had a few days before paid four pounds for fear of being involved in the same manner as I was; and as they knew the frauds of this Company appeared plain, not only to themselves, but to all the City, I expressed my astonishment at their thus assembling to maintain what oath and duty directed them to destroy. I must confess the Gentlemen behaved with the utmost modesty, not a man of them attempting to defend their proceeding, or contradict me. The Recorder turned about and asked the Master, whether he had taken four pounds of Mr. *Harrison*? Yes, it has been customary. What, is he an *Englishman*? "Sir, said I, perhaps you may deem him a Foreigner, he was born at *Chilham* about six miles off." Oh fie, *Davison*, said he, let the man have his money returned; and as none of them threatened me about law, I paid what respect I owed and departed.

What cause could induce this man to treat me with such mean language? Could he not bear the sight of a man who by honestly asserting his right, had marr'd his design? or could he imagine the ascendant he has gained over the Mayor and Alder-

men, has given him such a power over a Citizen as to command such words as will best answer his purpose?

AMBITION aims at what it has no pretention to; obedience and respect. Yet those men who look with fear and trembling on all above them, and with contempt on all below them, seldom see that they are despised by all mankind.

I WAS informed that after my departure it was settled that Mr. *Harrison* should have his money; that an examination should be made into the proceedings of all the Companies, and for the future they were to be very good and very honest; but it soon appeared that the seed fell on stony ground; for, on a mature reflection, they prudently considered that if Mr. *Harrison* had a return, every other Citizen would expect the same, and a precedent of this kind would convince the Members of all Companies that they had been imposed on; and the consequence might be, such a number of actions on their backs as might sweep away both Money and Charter: so to ward off this blow, as they could not be more exposed to the publick, they determined once more to practise on Alderman *Davison*, who had now entirely given it up. D—h it, *Davison*, said one, we are determined, if possible, to keep up our heads in this affair; we don't want you, by G—d, to carry

carry on another law-suit, there will be no occasion for it, take my word ; but if you don't apply for another order of prosecution we cannot grant it ; so we only want you to appear in the affair, and as it has cost *Roch* so much, I'll be d—n'd if I don't believe he'll submit when the order is granted. This point being settled I had notice given me once more to meet the Master at the Court-Hall, where the Mayor and Aldermen were to stand by and see fair play ; in the mean time I waited on — *Bing*, Esq; then Mayor, who has the character of a very honest man. I shewed him the copy of the By-Law, and satisfied him that the Mayor and Aldermen only were appointed Judges of all disputes between the Members and the Master ; and as every article was plain and easy, I told him, I wondered that they on the former interview invited the Recorder, who they knew was Counsel on their side, and whose behaviour rather prevented than forwarded an examination ; and requested that he might not be invited again, and that they would order the Books and By-Laws of the Company before them, assuring him that I would in a few minutes clear up what they so many years had held in suspense, by making it appear that the Company was considerably indebted to me, and hoped I should have justice.

On the day appointed, I attended ; and when I entered, there appeared the Recorder ! I observed by his station that the command of the day was again given to him ; and being eager for the engagement, without receiving word or signal from his generalissimo, the Mayor, he began the attack. “ Sir, said he, have you received a bill lately from the Builders Company.” “ Sir, says I, if I have ; I pay no regard to it.” Then turning to the Mayor and Aldermen, I asked whether the Books and By-Laws of the Company were present ? This was putting the match to a dangerous train, which he knew would blow up their whole magazine ; to smother which he hastily cried out, “ don’t be pert, Sir.” “ Pert, Sir ?” “ Pray by what authority do you presume to take such a freedom with me ?” “ Withdraw,” said he. “ Not at your request ; you have no authority here ; I came here by invitation of the Mayor, and here shall I stand ’till ordered by him to depart.” This caused silence for a considerable time ; at last one of the Aldermen rose up and said, “ Mr. *Rock*, I believe it is the sentiments of the gentlemen that you withdraw.” “ Gentlemen,” said I, “ if you give your authority up to him, I shall neither regard him nor you ;” and so withdrew, reflecting on the uncommon behaviour of these gentlemen, who
not

not succeeding in doing me the injury they designed in a Court of Justice, had thus invited me twice into their private chamber, to give the man who failed in the undertaking, an opportunity either to persuade or insult me into their measures.

WHAT motive could induce this man to affront me, and deny this fair examination I required? Certainly the liberties of the people must be in a dangerous situation when their Governors despise their just applications.

NEXT General Court the Aldermen told the Commoners, that *Roch* said he did not regard either Aldermen or Recorder; and that it was absolutely necessary to make an example of him, or in time they would be p—d on by every body. The Commoners came into the measures of the Aldermen, and it was agreed that the Builders should again have leave to sue me; and an order for that purpose was once more entred into the City Book; but Mr. *Davison* would be no longer their dupe; so the order still remains unexecuted, a monument either of their honour or infamy.

I MUST here take notice of that generosity which is natural to the better sort of Citizens, many of whom on hearing of this last order of prosecution, insisted, that I should neither submit to the action, nor spend a shilling in defence of it; and I am confident

confident that the same set of men will lend assistance to the first man that is attempted to be imposed on in that way.

As no prosecution was commenced against me, the Companies still dwindled more and more; and as I had acquainted the Members of the Builders Company with the contents of the By-Law, those few who did go paid no quarterage, and the Masters, Counsellors, and a few more, who kept up the shew of a Company, were obliged on feast days to club for their dinner.

Now young Freemen in general ventured to work for themselves, and to put what money they had into trade; yet one uncommon instance happened. I was one evening in the shop of Mr. *Lane*, a purchaser, and Shoemaker by trade, when the officers of the Leatherfellers Company entered and threatened to prosecute him, in the same kind of language the Builders had used to me. I acquainted Mr. *Lane* that he was under no obligation to pay it; that I had copies of most of their By-Laws, and that none of them obliged any man to enter: but he, being a timid man, said he would rather pay 20*l.* than be involved in a law-suit as I was. I then advised him to petition the Corporation; he accordingly went with the petition, and the Mayor, — *Plomer*, Esq; who was averse to such proceedings, ordered Alderman *Lad* to produce

duce the By-Law. He did so, and at the same time assured them that he had the Recorder's opinion on it, and that He said the demand on Mr. *Lane* was just and lawful. The By-Law was read, and the Mayor and several of the Aldermen assured me that there appeared no kind of obligation on Mr. *Lane* to pay the money; notwithstanding which, Alderman *Lad*, and several of the Corporation who are Members of the Leatherfellers Company (though the man stood there as a petitioner) bullied him out of his money in the Court-Hall; and on a doubt that I made concerning what *Lad* had said of the Recorder's opinion, and to decide a wager that was laid on it; *Lad* went with the two Wardens of the Company to the Recorder, and they, who are men of good reputation, returned, and made oath before the Mayor, that the Recorder said the By-Law was good and of such force and validity as would oblige Mr. *Lane* to pay 4 *l.* to the Company.

ABOUT the same time *Lad* made a demand on Mr. *Chalklen* Clock-maker, to pay the like sum to the Smith's Company; Mr. *Chalklen* requested to see the By-Law by which he claimed the money; which the other refused. Mr. *Chalklen* then proposed going with him to Counsellor *Mills* for his opinion on it, offering to pay both demand and opinion if the Counsellor deemed the demand

demand legal: which was rejected; yet notwithstanding these fair proposals, the other had the assurance to threaten a prosecution against him; and told him he would injure himself in trade, as *Roch* had done, by contending: but as the Clerk of the Company who kept the original By-Law, was at that time dead, I found means to get it, and had at Mr. *Chalklen*'s expence the opinion of Counsellor *Mills* on it, who made it plainly appear from under his hand that they had no kind of demand on him or any one else: first, that there was no such trade as Clockmaker in *England* at the time the By-Law was made; and secondly, that there was no obligation on the Company to admit but whom they pleased; and consequently no obligation on any to enter. This opinion being shewn by Mr. *Chalklen* to others who were in the same state, they all stood in open defiance. The Grocers Company, who were in the same state with the rest, met and proposed a considerable subscription to their small remaining stock; and endeavoured, by this kind of appearance, to fright their Members to compliance; but it was now too late; every one's eyes were open.

THIS subscription being made a jest of, they determined if possible to try how far the appearance of a law-suit might prevail; but before they proceeded in such a weighty
 5 affair,

affair, and having the fate of the Builders before them, they were determined to have the advice of a Counsellor that might be relied on, and applied to Counsellor *Mills*, who gave his opinion, as he had done on the other By-Laws, that no man was obliged to pay to it; and, as great regard is paid to what he says, they gave over all thoughts of law, and the person who had been Master many years resigned his command, and the office was immediately filled up by an Alderman; but in this case the Citizens paid no more regard to an Alderman, than the Frogs did to their wooden king. The Woollen-drapers Company, being reduced to half their number, determined to husband what money remained, and neglected to invite the Mayor, Recorder and the train that usually attended them; upon which *J—k* told Mr. *B—y* one of the principal Members, “ that the Corporation would not stand by them when they wanted them to frighten their disobedient Members;” but he answered, “ their disobedient Members stood in defiance of the Corporation.” This was a sad stroke upon poor *Jack*, who could by no means shove himself in for a dinner, for they were determined no longer to feed a pack that had lost their scent: and things going thus against them in all quarters, they

were now determined to try another method; and as the old laws had no regard paid them, endeavour to make new ones.

As *Lad* and *Pembroke* had three Companies between them, they imagined it would not appear so well to begin with their own as they were Aldermen, and must have a hand in the making them; so they tried once more on the Builders, who had formerly been their dupes, the present Master being no Member of the Corporation, and they agreed, if he and his Counsellors would apply, to grant them a new By-Law, allowing double the quarterage that they had before; on an imagination that if this would go down, and the Citizens could be persuaded they had such a power, that they might make new By-Laws for their own Companies. The Builders could have no objection against this proposal, for they had lately paid off their bond to the heirs of Mr. *Davison*, and as there were several Freemen to enter, this gave them a prospect of reimbursing themselves; but then there was a dangerous fish in the stream, this d—d *Roeb* had tore our old net to pieces, and if we spread the new one for him, he will certainly break through and make way for all the rest; so, to keep all safe and sound, the stile of Cabinet-maker must not be mentioned in the new law.

EVERY

EVERY thing being settled according to agreement, the Mayor and Aldermen met in their dark or back room, and a majority gave consent to this new By-Law; but as it could not be compleat, 'till a general court gave the Commoners an opportunity of shewing their principles, by consenting to have the City Seal put to it; on hearing of this extraordinary new By-Law, I waited on the highest Worship among them, well knowing that it could not be executed without the consent of the Mayor. I stood before him with that respect, which their usage has taught me to pay to the office; and told him what I had heard concerning this extraordinary new By-Law, and that it was concerted unknown to the generality of the Company: he answered, "that
 " he was sure I was mistaken; that he was
 " informed by the Master, that the number
 " of fifty or sixty had consented to it last
 " quarterly meeting" "Sir," said I, "you
 " might have avoided such an imposition
 " by examining their books, which would
 " have convinced you that half that num-
 " ber did not meet, the most of the mem-
 " bers being tired of the Company." "In-
 " deed, said he, "you are mistaken; your
 " supposition arises from the dispute you
 " have had with them." As I could not absolutely contradict him I bowed and departed, and went directly to thirteen of the

Members as they came in my course, who had all paid fines to the Company, and several of them seniors who constantly attended; they all told me they never had received a summons to meet, either to make a new By-Law or alter the old one; and the most of them said they paid no regard to the Company: with a list of their names I returned to the Mayor, assuring him of what they all said; observing that such practices ought not to be encouraged by Magistrates; that if there was a new By-Law made, it should be by consent of the people who were to be governed by it; and that it was customary on any particular occasion to express it in their quarterly summons, as on feast days, which are always mentioned; that nothing could be so material as making a new By-Law; and as the Master was chosen by a majority of the Company, I thought it an extraordinary stride for him and his Counsellors to take, in altering, or making laws without the approbation of the Members; and that if such a thing was requisite, the general feast day was the proper time to make such a proposal, when the greatest number was present; and as the method they had taken to procure this By-Law, seemed rather a design in the Master and Counsellors to answer some private end of their own, more than the general good of the Company, I requested

quested to be admitted into the Hall to hear it read, when it was offered for the approbation of the Commoners; acquainting him that I thought I had a Right to such admission, as I had formerly paid four pounds to the Company by order of the Corporation; and, if I liked the law, to be admitted a Member: but he said every thing was agreed on, and it might make a confusion, and that he could not bear the least noise; that whenever there was a noise in the house, he quitted it. These were such strong reasons (knowing his worship to be a very delicate gentleman) that I urged it no farther.

Now I was determined to send another petition; but as I had sent so many before, and in each had taken different methods to move the disorder with which they seemed infected, I was now at as great a loss as the musicians of *Tarentum*, who are obliged to labour at so many different tunes, before they can hit upon one that will move the patient to work off the envenomed bite of the *Tarantula* *. I used no language in my former ones that could have given offence to the highest Court in *England*; indeed I did

* *Tarantula*: A kind of Spider in the City of *Tarentum* in *Apulia*, whose bite is infectious, and causes a stupidity which nothing can cure but musick; and the musician is obliged (frequently) to try several tunes, which in general are very brisk, before he can hit on one that will move the patient to dance, which (when moved) he does in such a violent manner as frequently carries off the disorder.

did not meanly beg for what I had a right to require ; for bad men take an advantage of such application, on a surmise that the petitioner wants spirit to contend for his property ; and when weak men are applied to in that manner, they imagine the petitioner has no right to his request ; and as those which I had sent before had had no effect, I found there was a necessity to alter my stile, and sent the following.

“ The petition of Thomas Roch,”

WHEN I came to the words, right worshipful, my pen happened to want mending, and while I was mending it I forgot them, and so proceeded as follows,

“ Sheweth,

“ That a short time will give the Freedom of this and every other City to thousands of militia-men ; and that every third year will supply us with a fresh number, which will of course make Freedoms of little value to those who are intitled to them by birth or servitude.

“ Your petitioner therefore begs it may be considered, whether the exorbitant fines of the By-Law now before you, instead of being an encouragement to purchasers, will not deter any man from the folly of paying 20*l.* for his Freedom, when such numbers must be admitted without paying fines to either City or

“ Com-

“ Companies. Your petitioner apprehends
 “ that the granting a new By-Law is a
 “ plain proof that the old one was bad,
 “ and the money collected by it fraudu-
 “ lently obtained. Your petitioner indeed
 “ in three several petitions acquainted you
 “ that it was so, and pointed out the me-
 “ thods by which these frauds might be
 “ detected; but instead of complying with
 “ your petitioner’s just request, three seve-
 “ ral orders were given for prosecution of
 “ your petitioner, which were carried on
 “ in such an unparalleled manner against a
 “ Fellow-Citizen, as perhaps was never
 “ before heard of, and makes your peti-
 “ tioner almost accuse himself of folly in
 “ any farther attempt to complain of frauds
 “ and impositions. Thrice did this house
 “ assemble at the request of Alderman *Da-*
 “ *vison*, Plumber, to support a bad old By-
 “ Law, and thrice have they since met at
 “ the request of Mr. *Dudlow*, Plumber, to
 “ grant a very bad new one. Strange!
 “ passing strange! that such great dealers
 “ in lead should have so weighty an influ-
 “ ence on this house, and your petitioner
 “ (though a Member of the Company) de-
 “ nied admittance by his present worship
 “ the Mayor, to make his reasonable ob-
 “ jections. It is such a request as perhaps
 “ was never yet denied a Citizen; but per-
 “ haps we never yet have had such an ex-
 “ traordinary

" extraordinary Mayor. The Mayor and Al-
 " dermen now know that it is their duty
 " annually to inspect the By-Laws and Ac-
 " counts of the Companies, and to receive
 " half the fines for the use of the City in
 " general, which has always been neglec-
 " ted. I do not impute this neglect to
 " some of the Aldermen having been Ma-
 " sters of Companies; but by this neglect
 " the money which should have centered
 " in the publick stock, has taken a diffe-
 " rent course, and centered in the voraci-
 " ous bowels of some who are now per-
 " haps gnashing their teeth for fear of lo-
 " sing an opportunity of employing them
 " again at the former easy rate. Your pe-
 " titioner imagines it is not in the power
 " of this house, to make a law which shall
 " oblige every Freeman to pay a single shil-
 " ling into the City Stock, be the occasion
 " ever so great; he therefore prays you to
 " be satisfied, by what authority you can
 " force a single Freeman to pay 4*l.* to a
 " subordinate body. Sue him, sue him,
 " sue him. Your petitioner further requests
 " that you will make yourselves acquaint-
 " ed with the City Charter, and the na-
 " ture and force of By-Laws, and that you
 " will inform every man when he takes up
 " his Freedom, and puts himself under your
 " protection, that he is free from the fines
 " and impositions of Companies. This
 " will

“ will be acting like just Magistrates, and
 “ and making them what they ought to be,
 “ Freemen, and prevent the scandalous cus-
 “ tom of frightening them out of their mo-
 “ ney by threats of expensive prosecutions;
 “ which has been the frequent practice of
 “ some, who may be within hearing of
 “ this my petition. Your petitioner like-
 “ wise desires that you will cause restitu-
 “ tion to be made to such of his Fellow-
 “ Citizens as yourselves know have been
 “ wronged, Mr. *Harrison* the Carpenter in
 “ particular; which fraud appeared so plain
 “ before you, that your consciences would
 “ not suffer you to grant a third order to
 “ sue me, till Mr. *Hatcher* and Mr. *Dud-*
 “ *low* promised to return him his money;
 “ and though the promise was made two
 “ years ago, yet to the knowledge of most
 “ among you, the money still remains un-
 “ paid, and these men have been encou-
 “ raged to apply for this new By-Law, and
 “ stood unreprimanded before you.

“ As your petitioner is conscious to him-
 “ self that this house must be sensible of
 “ the truth of what he has set forth, he is
 “ not under the least apprehension of of-
 “ fending any honest man; and hopes that
 “ your conduct for the future will be such
 “ as may give him cause to pray in such a
 “ manner as every Citizen ought for good
 “ Magistrates.”

THE Mayor, who perused it, would not suffer such nonsense to be read in the Court-hall, but it was handed from one to the other, and though it did not work an immediate cure, yet it set them all dancing mad; and perhaps a few such tunes from a better hand might give the disorder a free perspiration. *Jack Lad* swore if he was Mayor he would commit the petitioner; but general opinion was, it ought to be burnt by a hangman; and as so great an emulation prevails among them for offices of honour, for fear *Lad* and *Pembrook* should contend for the jobb, his Worship put it into his pocket, with a design as I imagine, to do execution himself. Then the new By-Law was read, and several fine speeches made on it, so regular the order, so beautifully ornamented and so sound, convenient and uniform the whole structure, that it must be an honour and a good estate to the Builders Company: but Alderman *Hayward*, who had always looked upon these Companies as unlawful and useless burdens on the people, desired it might be laid by till the Recorder was asked some material questions concerning it; on which he was informed it was all drawn up by the Recorder: then there could be no doubt but it was, as the City Charter directs By-Laws should be, good, honest, wholesome, necessary and profitable. When I heard my old friend
had

had a hand in it, a blessing on this good man, thinks I, what uncommon pains does he take to serve the publick ! Now they went on to voting, hammer and tongs, and so elated were they with success, that some of them forgot they were sworn to secrecy, and declared that every Alderman present voted for it * except *Hayward, Bing, Plomer, and Harrison*; and every Commoner present † except one, and he they were confident opposed it but in jest. I was greatly surprized when they boasted of bringing over Alderman *Grey*, for he has shewn so great a dislike to their measures, that for many years past he has refused to appear on *Sunday* at the Cathedral Church with them ; and he himself told me that he had spoke to several Members of the Company who expressed their dislike to it, and informed me they knew nothing of this new By-Law ; by which I imagined that he was averse to it. O THIS SECRET HALL ! But perhaps he has an inclination to be a Candidate for Mayor next election, which cannot be without the approbation of his brethren ; and if that be his design, I wish him the success he merits.

THE Builders had gained on the Magistrates to give them a power over the Wheelwrights, who were not in the former By-Law ;

I 2

* Alderman *Creed* never appears among them.

† Mr. *Smith* and Mr. *Parker* did not attend : Mr. *Halbet* and Mr. *Marish* were elected Commoners a few Days afterwards.

Law ; and they, on an imagination that the Magistrates had a power to lay them under such contributions, gave in a petition begging to be excused from such exorbitant fines : but their petition was no more regarded than mine, for they were called into the Court-hall, and told by the Mayor, *Jack Lad* and several others, that they must be tributary to the new Law ; but they have had the advice of a friend, who has convinced them to the contrary. I am surprized the Builders left out the Bakers, who are so much in the wooden way, that they cannot carry on business without a faggot-stack ; and one of our Aldermen, a Baker, is remarkably nice in raising his faggot fabric according to order, yet I suppose he would grumble to be brought into the Builders Company.

THERE were several of the Corporation who knew I had given a report to the Mayor concerning the general dislike the Members had to this new By-Law ; but he knowing they were sworn to secrecy, ventured to tell them, that I had imposed on him and given a false information. When I heard this, upon my honour I thought his Worship was to the full as free and as much out of the way as his namesake the Recorder had been ; but as he is a great man amongst us, I dare not say, “ You lie, “ Sir” ; for we are sworn to be obedient to
the

the Mayor, without restriction; which I hope will never clash with our allegiance: so to keep myself within bounds of obedience, I sent him the following letter.

“ Sir,

“ Alderman *Grey* informed me last night
 “ that you have charged me with a lie in
 “ regard to the information I gave you of
 “ what the Members of the Builders Com-
 “ pany said concerning the new By-Law.
 “ When I went to you on that occasion,
 “ you told me that you and the Aldermen
 “ had consented to it on an information,
 “ that it was by desire of the Company in
 “ general. I told you that you had been
 “ imposed on, and that but few of the
 “ Company knew any thing about it. You
 “ answered, that you was sure I was mi-
 “ staken, and that you had been informed
 “ that the number of fifty or sixty had con-
 “ sented to it last quarterly meeting. I
 “ told you that you might have prevented
 “ such an imposition by examining their
 “ Books, which would have convinced you
 “ that half that number did not meet, the
 “ most of them being tired of the Com-
 “ pany; but to satisfy your Worship and
 “ myself, I went to the following per-
 “ sons, Mr. *Browning*, Mr. *Buckwell*, Mr.
 “ *Tustian*, Mr. *Madget*, Mr. *Seath*, Mr.
 “ *Hart*, Mr. *John Jagger*, Mr. *John Pi-*
 “ *card*,

“ card, Mr. *Valentine Picard*, Mr. *Harris*
 “ son, Mr. *Marsh*, all which declared they
 “ never had a summons to meet on such
 “ an occasion, nor had heard an article of
 “ the new By-Law read. These were all I
 “ went to, and a list of their names I
 “ shewed you, which I thought suffici-
 “ ent to convince you that it was not the
 “ general approbation of the Company, nor
 “ a proper method to obtain a By-Law.
 “ Now, Sir, if any of those men will deny
 “ what they asserted to me, or can prove
 “ that they saw an article of the new By-
 “ Law before that time, I shall think it
 “ sufficient to clear you; if not, I think the
 “ Mayor of the City, in vindication of his
 “ own character, should prove some other
 “ material falshood sufficient to authorize
 “ his Worship in casting such an aspersion
 “ in the Court-hall on

“ His humble servant,

“ *Thomas Roch.*”

WHETHER his Worship, as Mayor,
 thought it an honour to remain suspected,
 or whether they are obliged by such prac-
 tices to keep up the City Charter, I know
 not; but he neither answered the letter nor
 in any shape endeavoured to clear himself;
 but perhaps they have a By-Law for l—g.
 Before this man was Mayor I have often
 heard him declare himself an enemy to
 Com-

Companies, looking on them as impositions, and declined being a precedent to such abuses, by absenting himself many years from that to which he belonged; but as he was thrice in election without success, and at last came in through the interest of his brethren, who expected him to be of their party, I suppose he thought himself obliged to serve the interest of the publick to this kind of gratitude.

As so many of the principal Citizens have quitted the bench, they seldom trouble themselves about an election, and seem unconcerned who or what is Mayor; which I wish was otherwise, when there appears the least ballance of understanding and principle in either party; for it is generally seen that those who are least worthy of the office most strenuously contend for it, and as those kind of men herd together, they keep up a majority, and the property of the Citizens falls intirely into their hands.

So strong an instance of emulation for this office never appeared as did between those two Masters of Companies who have been, if any difference, the most strenuous in carrying on the prosecutions against me and making this new By-Law; for they, even at the time when so many reputable people paid their fines, sent drums and colours round this City in parties several days before they knew they should be in election, and the

Citizens

Citizens, who were thus apprized of their folly, determined to make it a matter of diversion, by keeping it up, and spurring them on to the utmost expence; and though there never was so great a number polled on such an occasion, yet each of them had the fewest friends that ever was known (except when his present Worship was Candidate, who had but one vote); for they who appeared for *Lad* voted because *Pembrook* should not be Mayor, and the others, that *Lad* should not; and they had such an equal share of this sort of esteem, that the election, which generally was over by ten o'clock at night, was left undetermined at four in the morning, and more money offered for a single vote than prudent men spend on an election: and these gentlemen are so proud of having such a warm contest, that whenever they get a quantity of Corporation Liquor sufficient to shew their qualifications, they cry, Ha, brother *Jack*, what a glorious heat we ran; never was there such a tight match in this City. By G—d, brother *Will*, neck and girt 'till we came to the post, and then you did not beat me a head, for the fellows were fools that gave you the casting votes. Ah, brother *Jack*, I wish they would put us in election again, I love the sport. I am bottom, boy. I'll shew you that I can run two heats as well as one. And thus they keep bragging of their

their glorious heat, without suspecting they were whipt every inch of the ground for publick diversion.

I HAD the honour of being invited by one of these gentlemen to a Corporation-entertainment; and observing he made a much greater figure than was usual for our Mayor, I took notice of his fine lac'd waistcoat. "This waistcoat, *Tom*," says he, cost me twelve guineas, I have another of them, both which I bought on this occasion; for as my friends have done me the honour to choose me Mayor (clapping his hands on his belly) by G—d I'll shew them what it is to be Mayor of *Canterbury*; and between you and I, *Tom*, I believe I shall make use of them on another occasion; for as my interest is so strong, I intend next election for Members of Parliament to offer myself a Candidate; it's the honest man, *Tom*, that's the man for the Parliament-house, and d—n my f—l if I take either a bribe or pension*." I could not help smiling at my friend, knowing him incapable of any service to provoke such a temptation.

I ONLY mention these as instances of that vanity which is so natural to such men, when they get into such offices, as neither nature nor their education designed them for; and to shew of what consequence it is

K

to

* He frequently declared, when drunk, that he would offer himself as candidate.

to the City in general to encourage such men in the pursuit of such a material office. As the election of these gentlemen came to so nice a point, the Recorder was sent for, who produced a *Latin* Charter, and read and construed it: but it appeared he was not the most excellent Master of that language; for, though the City Charter, he was convinced of errors by a gentleman a Citizen who stood by. As *he construed* this Charter, it appeared that an *Irish* Freeman had no right to vote for Mayor; and as that was relative to the question he refused to answer me in his closet, I took the opportunity of inquiring whether my vote stood good, as the Sable Contenders were then upon a par? He, not willing I suppose to give the gentleman any further trouble in explaining his *Latin*, went home and brought an *English* one, perhaps of his own translation. When he entred, he hastily cried out, Where is that man? He then read on, and made it plainly appear that poor Teague had no share in the election: but I being desirous to know whether that Charter contained a power to abridge me of that part of my Freedom; he told me he would answer no question but what the Mayor put to him. Most people thought he went home for the Charter on purpose to clear that point, there then appearing so great an occasion

caſion for it; but he rather choſe to leave it to Charter's elder brother, the law.

It is impoſſible for me to give a fair relation of the preſent ſtate of this our Corporation without mentioning theſe particulars; yet perhaps theſe worthy Worſhips may take umbrage at my making it publick: but I ſhall beg of them (if they can) ſeriouſly to conſider how they have played both with my property and character in their ſecret Hall. How often have they ſaid, with a deſign to injure me in trade, that no man ought to deal with or give countenance to a fellow who had oppoſed the Corporation? I ſhall likewiſe requeſt my Fellow-Citizens (for whoſe good this is deſigned) to conſider what may be the conſequence if ever the Charters or By-Laws ſhould fall into the hands of a ſet of men, who may claim the power of concealing them from the Citizens to whom they belong, and under that cover preſume to abridge them of their right of Freedom, and unlawfully collect large ſums of money. Have I not been treated as a common offender to the publick, only for aſſerting my right? and have not thoſe men who were ſworn to protect me, on receiving a 500 l. bond to indemnify themſelves, delivered me up to a multitude, and jeſtingly ſaid, the law is open to him, let him fight it out; knowing that though my cauſe was juſt, I might be ſtrip

to the skin between them and the Lawyers before I could enter a Court of Justice to gain a fair hearing?

IF we look but a few yards from us without the City gate or within the precincts of the Cathedral, we see the inhabitants, who are free from this Corporation tyranny, buying and selling and dealing at pleasure; must not this be a mortifying scene to men who by purchase or service have acquired what they call a Freedom, and dare not extend their trade without paying such intolerable taxes, or go through a vexatious and expensive scene as I have done? or can any man who knows himself in a free kingdom, and has laboured under the unjust persecution of such a petty arbitrary government, pay the least regard to the authors of such abuses?

YET, on the least suspicion of mismanagement in national affairs, these worthy patriots will shrewdly shake their heads, and cry, what a plague can become of the money that's raised? there is certainly bad management at the helm.

WOULD any of those men sue for a debt in trade and allow it under forty shillings, and immediately after make a demand (on the same right) of 6 *l.* 15 *s.* 3 *d.* and not having that complied with, make another demand of 2 *l.* 1 *s.* 4 *d.* and after that sue for 1 *l.*

45? they certainly would not, being sensible that such open frauds would intirely ruin their credit: yet these gentlemen when they met in the Court-Hall, where they are sworn to do justice and keep secrecy, notwithstanding the remonstrances that were laid before them, gave orders of prosecution for each of these demands; and when they found the Citizens would no longer be imposed on, not being contented with the injury they had done, they met privately to renew their abuses on the publick, and transmit such abominable By-Laws to posterity. If the Court-Hall and the Market-Houses were burnt to the ground, they have no power to make a By-Law which shall oblige each Citizen (though on such an extraordinary occasion) to pay four pounds towards the rebuilding them: yet these Companies, who have no power but what the Corporation has given them, pretend to Right, and levy a fine on a Citizen several years after he has purchased his Freedom, if he alters or adds a different branch to his trade; and that for no other purpose than to be spent between them and the Corporation: these men can have no other motives for it than a mean design to cripple their neighbour in trade, and live at free-cost on the publick. How remarkable have many of these men made themselves

selves in watching every little occasion, and
 meanly solliciting for Corporation treats !
 and how earnestly do they support the in-
 terest of every man in election, who, they
 think will contribute most to their desires !
 and how much do they expose themselves to
 publick ridicule, whenever such an occasion
 offers ! Even in a late instance, when the
 Mayor (who is a man of sobriety) refused
 to give them a publick treat as it happened
 on a *Sunday*, judging how they would use
 both the day and liquor ; yet several of them
 met at a tavern before his house, and in an
 ostentatious manner revelled and huzza'd,
 to convince the Mayor and the publick,
 that the Sabbath should lay no restriction
 on Corporation Members : and when the
 Mayor indulged them a few nights after
 on the King's Proclamation, a Clergyman
 whom they invited, was obliged to quit
 the company on account of obscene dis-
 course and lewd songs, in which they join-
 ed, and encouraged in his presence : and, as
 I would convince the publick that I had
 not the best of men to contend with, these
 very Aldermen who have been most stre-
 nuous in maintaining those Companies, and
 carrying on the prosecution against me, af-
 ter spending the night and morning in this
 manner, reeled home in sight of the pub-
 lick, to convince the world that they were
 regardless

regardless of that reputation which ought to attend both their years and their offices. These practices are such bad examples to the lower sort, and such a reflection on the better sort, that every Member of the community has a right to shew his resentment. Must not any man look with horror on those people, when he hears his children or servants swear or talk obscene, and add, "as Alderman such-a-one says?" Do not all good people in the world pay the highest regard to the credit of their kingdoms and Cities, and resent in the highest degree the least reflection that is cast on the place of their nativity? and if an innate principle of honour makes us so tenacious in this point, should not the Rulers of Cities endeavour, by their laws and examples, to model and regulate the customs and manners of the people, in such a manner as may give them a just title to support, what by nature they are so ambitious to contend for? What can the officers of the army think, who are always invited to our rejoicing evenings; and as their stations in life spread them in many parts of the world, what report can they make concerning the general behaviour of our Citizens, when they have been witnesses of such scenes of debauchery in the Magistrates, who ought to be, and are generally deemed the best of the people? Will not the honour and use of our Corporation

Corporation be irretrievably lost, if by bad practices the men in power should drive from that assembly the most worthy and wealthy of our Citizens? That animal of prey, the Fox, makes such a stench about his dwelling, that every decent creature by nature, avoids his habitation.

How mortifying must it be to the Clergy to see their good endeavours thus abused! to be driven from the Company of Magistrates on an ocular demonstration that neither their pious precepts, good examples, the honour and duty that are due to that reverend body, nor even their presence (which is frequently regarded by the most abandoned) can lay the least restriction, nor keep within the bounds of decency and sobriety, those men who are appointed rulers of the people! And shall the Citizens who know themselves thus abused submit to a revival of those By-Laws which have been the support of so many scenes of debauchery? and tamely say, if we refuse to comply with their impositions or expose their behaviour, they will certainly do us an injury in trade? Many indeed have said so, and under that dreadful apprehension complied with their Customs.

YET these men boast that their ancestors made such a noble stand against the CONQUEROR as brought him to compliance, and gained such Liberties as no other county can

can boast of. Strange! then that the descendants of those brave men should submit to such impositions as are not practised in any other county, and for fear of losing the sale of a few yards of cloth, a few pair of stockings, a set of knives, a hat or a cheese, should resign what their forefathers ventured both their lives and fortunes for!

Is it not sufficient to convince the publick, that this Corporation and Company know they have no right to such demands, and that they are so tamed by the opposition I have made, that they have not even dared to mention the stile of my trade in their new By-Law, for fear of having it destroyed. Yet, though I have nothing farther to fear on my own account, it would give me the utmost concern if the expence and pains I have been at should not turn to the advantage of my Fellow-Citizens: for after being so inhumanly treated, I sat down contented with the victory, and never should have exposed them to the world by proclaiming it, had they not despised the petitions of the Citizens, and endeavoured to persuade the publick that they had a right to renew their impositions.

A By-Law must have the approbation, and be signed by the Judges of Assize, before it can be put in execution, and as the Magistrates paid no regard to the petition
L of

of the Citizens, I sent the following letter to one of the Judges of the Affize.

Canterbury, 28th July 1760.

MY LORD,

I AM confident your Lordship will not think this an indecent freedom, as it is designed to prevent impositions on his Majesty's subjects.

It has been a custom in this City (for many years past) for the Magistrates to oblige a Citizen who has purchased his Freedom, to pay four pounds to a Company of the same trade, for toleration to follow his business; and if the purchaser deals in several articles, he has been obliged to pay four pounds to each Company; and as the Aldermen are frequently Masters of these Companies, they have claimed a power of refusing a sight of the By-Laws to any who have desired to see them, and either the demand must be complied with or a Corporation prosecution is commenced.

On my disputing a demand made by the Builders Company, the Corporation endeavoured to support an action against me as long as the law would admit, which ended in my favour about this time three years before your Lordship: and as they could not maintain their action, the Citizens have since refused to comply with such demands. The Magistrates now own their old By-Laws

Laws deficient, but still claim a power from their Charters to make new ones on the same footing; and have lately put the City Seal to one designed for a Company of Builders; and if it succeeds intend to revive the rest.

There are now a number of Freemen on whom they intend to make their demands, several of whom petitioned against this new By-Law, but they were called into the Court, and told by the Mayor and several of the Aldermen that they must be subject and pay to it: and as I apprehend it will be offered at the ensuing Assizes for your Lordship's sanction, I hope your Lordship will not be offended at this information, from

Your Lordship's

Most obedient servant,

T H O M A S R O C H,

Of Saint George's-street, Canterbury.

His Lordship after perusing the letter gave it to the Recorder of the City, and remarked that it was a matter which concerned him. What his Lordship observed further on it, I am unacquainted with, but their By-Law still remains (as I imagine it ever will) unsigned by the Judges.

F I N I S.

I was dissatisfied, but did claim a power from
their Charter to make new ones on the
same footing; and have lately put the City
Seal to one designed for a Company of
Builders; and if it succeeds, intend to let
the same be used.

There are now a number of Townsmen on
whom they intend to make their demands;
several of whom petitioned against this new
Bill-law, but they were called into the
Court, and told by the Mayor and several
of the Aldermen that they must be subject
and pay to it; and I apprehend it will
be ordered at the City Assizes tomorrow
morning's session, to your Lordship
will not be offended at this information
from



Your Lordship's

Most obedient servant,

THOMAS ROCH.

Of Saint George's Ward, City of London.

This I send after passing the letter
gave it to the Recorder of the City, and
reminded that it was a matter which con-
cerned him. What his Lordship ordered
further on is, I am unacquainted with, but
their Bill-law will remain (as I imagine it
ever will) unchanged by the Judges.

F L W I S.